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BRIEF NOTES

The First Expedition of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago

This expedition was intended to be a preliminary reconnaissance of the needs and opportunities for field research in the Near East since the changes resulting from the great war; but it was also hoped that many opportunities for the purchase of antiquities and historical documents of the ancient Orient might present themselves. These aims were in the main fulfilled. After attending the important joint meeting of the *Royal Asiatic Society*, the *Société Asiatique*, and the *American Oriental Society* in London early in September, 1919, Professor Breasted proceeded to Paris where he purchased a valuable collection of Oriental antiquities, chiefly Egyptian, including especially a finely illuminated hieratic papyrus of the Book of the Dead.

The remainder of the trip to Egypt via Venice was beset with many difficulties, but Dr. Breasted reached Cairo by the end of October, having fallen in with Professor Clay of Yale on the way. A few weeks' work in the Cairo museum viewing the many new accessions there, included a study of the new Cairo fragments of the so-called Palermo Stone, which disclosed the existence of a new dynasty, or group of at least ten kings of united Egypt who ruled *before Menes*, that is *before the beginning of the usually recognized dynastic period*. Extensive purchases of antiquities in the hands of dealers were also made, and a trip up the river as far as Luxor extended these purchases to Upper Egypt. This brief notice does not permit the mention even of the leading items of these large accessions. An interesting feature of the work in Egypt was an airplane trip along the pyramid cemeteries on the margin of the Sahara for sixty miles, on which Professor Breasted was able to make a series of airplane views of these great tomb groups, with the especial purpose of locating prehistoric cemeteries which might show up in the negatives, though not visible on the ground. This opportunity was available through the kind offices of Lord Allenby, who is much interested in archaeological research. The members of the expedition assembled in Cairo and Upper Egypt dur-

ing December, 1919, and January, 1920, and some of them pushed up the Nile as far as the First Cataract. Early in February, all five of the men belonging to the expedition were in Cairo ready to leave for Asia. They included Prof. D. D. Luckenbill, Ludlow S. Bull and William F. Edgerton, both fellows of the University of Chicago, and Prof. A. W. Shelton of Emery University, besides the director, Professor Breasted.

The party sailed from Port Said on Feb. 18th, 1920, and after transshipment in Bombay arrived in Basrah on March 9. Every facility was afforded the expedition by the British authorities, and by March 16 the party was ready to leave Basrah for a rapid survey of the leading sites in Babylonia. The Basrah-Baghdad railway line had been completed and opened only a few weeks before and the party was thus the first archaeological expedition to make the Basrah-Baghdad trip with the use of this line, which greatly facilitated the journey. The first stop was at Ur, now called 'Ur Junction' (!), whence the party visited the ruins of Ur and Eridu, using Ford vans furnished by the British Army, and proceeded also via Nasiriyah up the Shatt el-Hai some eighty miles as far as Kal'at es-Sikkar. From this point Tell Yokha was visited, besides a number of unidentified sites of which there are many on both sides of the Shatt el-Hai, especially above Kal'at es-Sikkar on the east side of the Shatt. Returning to the railway at Ur Junction the trip up the Euphrates to Baghdad was made by rail, stopping at all the well-known sites, especially Babylon, left precisely as last worked by the Germans under Koldewey.

The Tigris trip was likewise made by rail as far Kal'at Shergat (the spellings are those of the new British survey), that is some eighty miles below Mosul and Nineveh. All the leading sites as far as Khorsabad were visited and studied. While there had been more than one dangerous corner of Babylonia through which the expedition passed, it was on the Tigris journey that the most hazardous situations were first experienced. On arriving at Shergat on the return trip the railway was cut by the Arabs and also broken in two other places by a heavy storm.

On the return to Baghdad the Civil Commissioner, Col. A. T. Wilson, the British Governor General of Mesopotamia, asked the expedition to proceed up the Euphrates to Salihiyah, some 300 miles above Baghdad, in order to record and rescue as far as

possible some extraordinary Roman paintings disclosed by the excavation of a rifle pit. The British authorities civil and military furnished the transportation, seven automobiles, and leaving Baghdad on April 29th, the expedition reached the vast Roman fortress of Salihiyah on the right bank of the Euphrates on May 4th. The paintings, which proved to be of unusual interest, were duly photographed and as carefully studied as the time would permit, and on the morning of May 5th, the expedition shifted to five Turkish arabanahs or native wagons, and entering the Arab State threw themselves upon the protection of the local officials of King Faisal. Moving up the right bank of the Euphrates through Dêr ez-Zôr and past the mouths of the Khabur and the Balikh, the expedition reached Aleppo in safety on the fifth of May, 1920, being the first group of non-Moslems to cross the Arab State since its proclamation in March, of the same year. Although the expedition passed directly over the fighting ground between Arabs and British, it met with the friendliest reception from all the sheikhs, and learned much of the present situation in King Faisal's dominions. The occasion which made it possible for an American expedition to take the risk, however, was not only the friendly feeling of the Arabs toward Americans. It was likewise the fact that the British had just drawn in their front on the Euphrates about a hundred miles down river from Salihiyah to a point just above Anah. As a result the Arabs were momentarily feeling in the best of humors, during which the American party managed to slip through in safety. The chief danger for the time was from brigands.

As there was imminent danger that the railway south of Aleppo would be cut by the Arabs in order to hamper the French, the expedition made haste southward, stopping only at Tell Nebi Mindoh, the ancient Kadesh of Ramses II's famous battle. A careful reconnaissance of this place was made, and after a visit at Baalbek the expedition hurried out of the hazardous regions of inner Syria and made its headquarters at Beirut, whence the leading sites along the ancient Phoenician coast were inspected. After a brief visit to Damascus and two conferences with King Faisal, the expedition shifted to Palestine, but here, just as in Syria, conditions were too disturbed to permit much work. The Plain of Megiddo, where the party endeavored in

vain to reach Tell el-Mutesellim, was quite unsafe, and even Jericho was inaccessible from Jerusalem.

The conditions as to available labor for excavation, the times of year when such work would least disturb the demand for agricultural labor, the varying scale of wages, especially the increase in wages resulting from war conditions, available vacant land for disposal of dump,—all these local questions conditioning excavations were examined at most of the leading sites in Western Asia except in Asia Minor, where the rebellion of Mustafa Kamal Pasha made the country quite inaccessible. At the same time the legal conditions and the regulations of government to which such work would be subject were taken up with the French and British authorities. A valuable collection of cuneiform documents and works of art was obtained in Western Asia also, besides a group of some 250 Cappadocian tablets purchased in Cairo.

Dr. Luckenbill remained in Beyrut to develop the large series of negatives taken by the expedition in Western Asia, while the rest of the party returned to Cairo, especially to look after the shipment of purchases to America. On hearing of the facts observed by the expedition in Asia Lord Allenby requested Professor Breasted to change his route and to return to America via London in order to report in person to Premier Lloyd-George and to the Foreign Minister, Earl Curzon. Professor Breasted therefore left for London in June with letters from Lord Allenby to the two ministers and reported as desired. The antiquities secured have since arrived safely in America, but it will be long before they can be properly installed and exhibited.

JAMES H. BREASTED

University of Chicago
September 10, 1920

NOTES OF THE SOCIETY

The following have been added to the Committee on Enlargement of Membership: President Talcott Williams, Dr. J. E. Abbott, Professors F. R. Blake, A. V. W. Jackson.

On page 221 of the last (June) number of this volume (40) of the JOURNAL, in the report of the Proceedings at Ithaca, the paper on 'Notes on Criticism of Inscriptions: I, The Behistan